

R E P O R T
OF THE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Town of Oakham,

FOR THE YEAR

1868-69.

Published by the requirement of the Statute of February 23, 1859.

WORCESTER:
TYLER & SEAGRAVE, CITY PRINTERS,
Spy Block, 252 Main Street.

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Report of the School Committee.

The School Committee for the year just closed, present the following report:

The town appropriated \$1100 for schools the past year. We received \$109.28 from the State fund. Amount for support of schools \$1209.28.

Expense of teachers in summer \$463.75, in winter \$733.50. Amount \$1197.25. This does not include the cost of fuel. There is over \$100 less for our summer schools in 1869 than we had in 1868.

The sums allowed each District were as follows, including State Fund: East Center \$179.66, West Center 153.66, South West 121.66, South 149.66, East Hill 121.66, Coldbrook 178.66, North 152.66, West 151.66.

There is now due the several districts: East Center \$65.78, West Center 49.39, East Hill 47.91, North 44.06, West 41.78, Coldbrook about 28.00, South 14.88, South West 59.66. Amount \$351.46.

We would call attention to the fact that some districts are without sufficient funds to meet the expense of a summer school. It seems necessary that some action should be taken in regard to it.

Arithmetics and Geographies have been changed during the past year. We have now Eaton's series complete, and Cornell's new edition of Geographies. These new books at retail prices would cost nearly \$300; in exchange they cost less than \$60. In our judgment a two-fold advantage has been secured. *New* books have taken the place of the *old*, and in a literary point of view we regard the former an improvement on the latter.

Our schools have generally been successful, and we have no doubt that people in the districts are interested in their welfare. But we regard it as an evil that the names of parents are so seldom found on the register as visitors.

No record was kept of the number of visitors in the North district during the summer term. The school at Coldbrook not being closed at the time of writing this report, we have not the register, and consequently cannot give the number of visitors for that district. Aside from that, the whole number of visits in all our schools is 178. (This does not include visits examination days.)

Of this number only 14 were parents. Should they visit schools more frequently, it would tend not only to increase the interest of the children in their studies, and encourage the teacher, but it would enable them better to judge of the condition of the school, and might in some instances, at least, give them sympathy with the teacher, where now they have none.

A word of caution, however, may be here needed: When parents visit schools, they should be careful not to go expecting and seeking to find something that will strengthen previous prejudices. We do not expect perfection in those who teach, any more than in others of the same fallible race. Inexperienced teachers are of necessity often employed. Such should be encouraged by our sympathy and counsel, rather than discouraged by an opposite course.

Again: The office of teacher is such that it ought to command the respect of every individual. It should be borne in mind also, that a disrespectful word from the parent in the hearing of the child, lessens that child's respect for his teacher, at least it has that tendency. And when the scholar loses respect for his teacher, school hours will probably be of little benefit to him. Hence, when the parent manifests disrespect for the teacher, or speaks against him, he is preventing the education of his child. If complaints are to be made against the teacher, let the Committee be consulted. This way is open, and it is the only proper way. But let no complaint be made even in that way, unless there is some *solid reason* for it.

State aid which in the past we have received, we must hereafter lose, or else give up the district system. It may be said that we can do with less than six months' schooling, and thus lessen the expense. It should be remembered, however, that in failing to provide six months' schooling for each scholar during the year, we are liable to a fine of twice the amount ever appropriated in one year, by this town, for schooling purposes.

It is also important that some action be taken *now* that will put our school matters on a permanent basis. Among the reasons for such action are the following:

Some of our school houses are in any thing but good repair. Ventilation is poor in them *all*, except that at Coldbrook. In some of the others there is ventilation, but not sufficient to secure the invaluable boon of good air. It would not be strange if many children should lay the foundation of future disease and suffering by the impure air they breathe in the school room.

The seats in some of our school rooms, to use a mild term, are very uncomfortable. A visitor at one of the school examinations complain-

ed of the "hardness" of the seats. If those whose duty it is to remedy such evils, would, two or three times during the term, visit the school, each time occupying those seats three or four hours, they would be more effectually impressed with the need of improvement. We might name other particulars in which there is a loud call for repairs, but enough has been said.

What we wish to bring before the town is this, that while there is need of improvement—pressing need—the districts do not wish to be at the expense of putting their school houses in good condition, because of the uncertainty that hangs over the future, as to the management of matters pertaining to the education of our children. If we now put our school affairs on a basis that gives promise of permanency, there will then be encouragement to repair old school houses and build new ones.

EAST HILL DISTRICT.

Summer Term.—Length of school in months $2\frac{3}{4}$. Whole number of scholars 13. Average attendance 10. Wages of teacher per month \$16. Taught by Miss Etta M. Wood of West Brookfield. The number of scholars, as compared with last year, has doubled. This school appeared well whenever visited by the Committee, and at its close gave evidence of having made commendable progress. Neither absent nor tardy, Geo. H. Henry.

Winter Term.—Length of school in months 3. Whole number of scholars 12. Average attendance 11. Wages of teacher per month \$25. This school was taught in a very satisfactory manner by Mr. Henry A. Crawford. The number of scholars was small, but they were evidently interested, and commendable progress was made. As a reminder to other teachers, we would say that punctuation was well attended to.

Neither absent nor tardy—Flora M. Crawford, Fannie W. Hapgood, Charles F. Dean, Albert F. Hapgood.

SOUTH DISTRICT.

Summer Term.—Length of school in months 3. Whole number of scholars 20. Average attendance 15 47-60. Wages of teacher \$22. Teacher Jane E. Shedd.

This term of school was very successful, and we think satisfactory to all concerned. The teacher has lost none of her former good reputation.

Neither absent nor tardy—Emma T. Adams, Mattie L. Boyd, Jessie Morgan, Julia Tobin, Etta L. Weld, Leon P. Boyd, Herbert E. Bush, Elmer A. Collier.

Winter Term.—Length of school in months 3. Whole number of scholars 33. Average attendance 26. Wages of teacher per month \$32. Taught by Miss Abbie J. Adams of West Brookfield.

This school was considerably broken up by the abdication of several scholars, and the teachers' power and influence lessened by some who remained. We have been able thus far to hear no good reason for such conduct, and must conclude that if the teacher had received the cooperation due her, the school would have been a success.

Neither absent nor tardy—Abby J. Dean, Lizzie S. Morgan, Jessie Morgan, Etta L. Weld, Emma T. Adams, Julia Tobin, Otis H. Adams, Allston V. Collier, Ernest W. Collier, Warren A. Guild, Elmer A. Collier.

SOUTH WEST DISTRICT.

Summer Term.—Length of school in months $2\frac{3}{4}$. Whole number of scholars 6. Average attendance 5. Wages of teacher per month \$16. Teacher, Miss Jennie H. Fitch of New York. This teacher had a good degree of literary attainment, and we thought a faculty to impart instruction, but by slack government and interest in some matters out of school, she failed to make it as profitable as we could wish. We commend the progress in reading.

Winter Term.—Length of school in months 3. Whole number of scholars 11. Average attendance 9. Wages of teacher per month \$20. Teacher, Jane E. Shedd.

There is no reason to doubt that this school has been highly successful. We are sorry that some scholars have been so unwise as to leave school—the best opportunity to gain knowledge this town affords. The record of attendance against some scholars was shameful.

Neither absent nor tardy—Ella J. Olmstead, A. Josie Lincoln, Jennie M. Mandall, Idelle A. Woodis, Jonas T. Shedd.

WEST CENTER.

Summer Term.—Length of school in months 3. Whole humber of scholars 30. Average attendance 24. Wages ,of teacher per month \$20. Teacher, Miss Abbie F. Lovell of Oakham.

The Committee failed to visit this school sufficiently to give as definite a report as would be desirable, but we believe the district was generally satisfied with the efforts of the teacher.

Neither absent nor tardy—Maria Butler, Ida H. Lovell, Eddie W. Holden.

Winter Term.—Length of school in months 3. Whole number of scholars 39. Average attendance 33. Wages of teacher per month \$30. This school was taught by Leonard P. Lovell of Oakham.

We are happy to say that owing to his earnestness and fidelity, some habits in that school detrimental to its interests, *seem* to have been rooted out. The district has abundant reason to be grateful for his faithful and successful efforts in governing a difficult school, as well as instructing those under his care.

Neither absent nor tardy—Maria Butler, Henry Babbitt, Henry Butler, George Butler, George Lovell, Freddie P. Spear, Charles M. Thompson.

WEST DISTRICT.

Summer Term.—Length of school in months $2\frac{1}{2}$. Whole number of scholars 28. Average attendance 16. Wages of teacher per month \$18. Teacher, Mary Ella Spooner.

The circumstances under which this school commenced were unfavorable, but the closing examination showed that fair progress had been made.

Winter Term.—Length of school in months $3\frac{1}{2}$. Whole number of scholars 31. Average attendance 26. Wages of teacher per month \$30. Taught by Miss Baker of East Templeton.

This school promised more at its commencement than it really accomplished. After the first few weeks, good order was not maintained. At the closing examination, however, the school appeared tolerably well.

Neither absent nor tardy—Ella S. Fobes, Mary Fobes, Mary Ripley, Susie Ripley, Charles H. Trowbridge.

NORTH DISTRICT.

Summer Term.—Length of school in months $2\frac{1}{2}$. Whole number of scholars 24. Average attendance $22\frac{1}{5}$. Wages of teacher per month \$24. This district was quite fortunate in securing the services of Miss E. A. Abbott of North Brookfield. From what we saw of her mode of teaching and discipline, we are satisfied that Miss Abbott is a teacher of no ordinary ability, and we should be most happy to see her again in our schools.

Neither absent nor tardy—Flora A. Green, Rosa J. Bullard, Mary A. Bullard, Minnie L. Brooks, Lizzie A. Gleason, Levi H. Adams, Henry D. Bullard, Willie A. Keep, Freddie A. Keep.

Winter Term.—Length of school in months 3. Whole number of scholars 26. Average attendance 21. Wages of teacher per month \$32. This school was taught by Wm. Holden of Princeton. The appearance of the school during the term, and at its close, indicated that he had endeavored to be faithful to his trust. While general satisfaction was felt in the district, your committee judge that a little

more energy and life in the school room, would have been desirable and profitable.

Neither absent nor tardy—Rosa J. Bullard, Flora A. Green, Henry D. Bullard.

COLDBROOK DISTRICT.

Summer Term. Length of school in months, 2 1-4. Whole number of scholars 17. Average attendance 13. Wages of teacher per month \$27.00. Miss Lizzie Baker of East Templeton, had charge of this term of school. We believe she was successful and gave general satisfaction.

Winter Term. Length of school in months 3. Whole number of scholars 27. Average attendance 24. Wages of teacher per month \$46.00. Teacher, J. H. Allen of Barre. At the time of writing this report the school is still in session; but we are satisfied from what we have already seen of the school that the teacher has fully sustained the high reputation of last winter.

EAST CENTRE.

Summer Term. Length of school in months 3. Whole number of scholars 33. Average attendance 29 17-30. Wages of teacher per month \$28.00. Mary A. Lovell of Oakham, teacher. This school was in excellent condition through the term. The scholars seemed to vie with the teacher to make this a profitable term. Under these circumstances, it need scarcely be said, that complete success was the result. The closing examination met our highest expectations.

Neither absent nor tardy—Alice W. Ayres, Carrie M. Lincoln, Jennie R. Woodis, Nathan R. Woodis.

Winter Term. Length of school in months 3. Whole number of scholars 37. Average attendance, 35. Wages of teacher per month \$30.00. Taught by Miss Carrie Harrington of Oakham. Never did Miss Harrington's superior ability in the art of instruction and superior tact in governing her scholars appear to better advantage than in the school of last winter. At the closing examination the scholars acquitted themselves, both as to deportment and recitation, in a manner creditable to themselves, their teacher and their homes.

Neither absent nor tardy—Alice W. Ayres, Georgiana Carter, Carrie M. Lincoln, Jennie E. Lincoln, Alice M. Morse, Lizzie A. Morse, Frank O. Ayres, George H. Lincoln, James F. Robinson, George W. Reed, Herbert B. Reed and Willie L. Reed.

J. C. HALLIDAY,
L. P. LOVELL,
H. W. LINCOLN, } *School Committee.*

